

Dear Members of the GAE Committee:

My name is Martin E. Cobern. I have been a Cheshire voter for more than four decades.

More than 650,000 Connecticut voters voted by absentee ballot in the 2020 CT General Election—which meant they could vote **safely**, early and on their own schedules. This led to record-breaking 80% voter turnout, with virtually no problems, despite the disruption of the COVID-19 epidemic.

Our state and democracy work best when the voices of **all** the voters are heard clearly. I therefore believe that voters should be able to again vote this year by absentee ballot as both COVID-19 and the fear of it persist. We must continue the COVID19 safety measures of 2020 and 2021 for 2022 and allow everyone to vote despite their illness or fear thereof.

Do not fear your voters, **listen to them!** Their choice is clear. Please protect the freedom to vote and pass **S.B. 184** and **H.B. 5262**.

Thank you.

Martin E. Cobern